

Ancient Arrowhead Found in Maryland



The arrowhead is shown at actual size.

Amateur archeologists have found an arrowhead near Seneca, Md., that was apparently dropped by a nomadic Indian hunter at least 3500 years ago. B.C.

The relic is the oldest evidence of human life in the Potomac Valley. Its design matches discoveries in other parts of the eastern United States and elsewhere.

Charles Douglas of Dickerson, Md., found the arrowhead while digging with members of the Southwestern Chapter of the Archeological Society of Maryland. It was plucked off the surface of a cornfield where the archeologists have found hundreds of artifacts from later Indian civilizations.

William Tidwell, president of the chapter, said the field is so rich in Indian relics because it apparently was a favorite stopping place for Indian travelers throughout the centuries. Higher than the surrounding area, it never was inundated, Tidwell said, and was saved from washing and later soil deposits.

The arrowhead is a particularly skillful production, according to Carl Miller, a Smithsonian Institution archeologist. He said primitive Indians made finer arrows than later Indians, who apparently lost the knack.

It was tied to the end of a lance to spear animals, probably bison, elk and deer, Miller said. The hunters who used them lived at least 2000 years before the discovery of the bow and arrow.

The arrowhead is made of a type of chalcedony stone, which is not native to the area, Miller said. It was probably manufactured several hundred miles away and carried into the Potomac area.

On an axis down its center, it is "fluted," or chipped in a jagged fashion. Archeologists speculate its maker did this to facilitate tying the point to the lance or, perhaps, to inflict a more serious wound on its victim.

A product of the Indians' late Stone Age, the relic represents a culture that had no pottery or agriculture and lived from hand to mouth on the fortunes of the hunt.

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